



January 27, 2025

HB 0048

The Honorable Marc Korman
Chair, House Environment and Transportation Committee
MD General Assembly
251 House Office Building
6 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: HB 0048 RAILROAD COMPANIES - CONDEMNATION AUTHORITY - APPLICATION

Dear Chairman Korman,

I am writing to outline our strong opposition to HB 0048.

The bill stands in direct opposition to the progress our organization supports and encourages. Our mission at the Chamber of Commerce is to ensure that county businesses can thrive, have access to a well-trained and educated workforce, and that county families have access to high-quality schools and safe neighborhoods.

Revoking the authority of eminent domain from a single railroad franchise - Baltimore Washington Rapid Rail – is short-sighted and antithetical to promoting innovation and development in our region. Baltimore-Washington Rapid Rail was, in fact, lawfully granted the authority of eminent domain by the Maryland Public Service Commission in October 2015, after review, public notice, and hearing, an indication of the support this franchise had at the time and continues to receive from a majority of Marylanders today.

While our organization focuses on the needs of all Maryland County residents and businesses, the Baltimore-Washington Maglev project represents benefits for more than just our county. Once the project starts construction, residents throughout the region will benefit from new job and business opportunities, increased community growth, innovative development opportunities, and a healthier environment. With this incredible transportation technology, we can reach the future we've envisioned for ourselves with less pollution, traffic, more efficient transportation and transit-oriented development.

This bill is an attempt to prevent a viable, safe, and efficient transportation technology option that will provide opportunities for many. We recommend that the Maryland Legislature stand on the side of progress and innovation and once again give this bill an unfavorable report, opening the door to growth and development for millions across the region.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Marco V. Ávila, P.E.'.

Marco V. Ávila, P.E.

Chairman of the Board & President/CEO
Maryland Hispanic Chamber of Commerce
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